

My dear sisters,

A.M.A. and A. B. C.

I find a few quiet moments just as the beautiful Sabbath draws to close and I hope I may be able to say a few words to you. When I speak of anyone not saying much Louisa says, "I suppose they think it not necessary" and now I wonder if it is necessary for me to fill pages to you telling of myself and my own experiences but knowing that you do love me and do wish to know something of my daily walk. I will try and gratify you, though I hardly know how to begin, and certainly cannot tell of the end.

The accident to Vinton occurred at 3.30 Wednesday P.M. Feb 8. All of the polishing on screwdrivers, mincing knives, pruning shears, etc. was done by Mr. E. and V. on emery wheels. That one had never been used. It differed a little from usual, and there was some discussion in regard to it and some of the men advised V. not to use it. But the work was urgent and he took the risk. He was bending over it, adjusting it while it was running at the rate of 2500 per minute, when it exploded, striking him between the eyes, crushing his forehead and destroying his nose and throwing him to the floor. Mr. E. stood near and saw it all. He thought he was surely killed. Strange to say, he did not quite lose consciousness. As they raised him up he said, "God help me, father pray for me" The ambulance soon came and his father and Mr. Knapp went with him to the doctor's office. Even there he did not faint and, when they brought him home, walked into the house with help. Mr. Knapp said he never saw such "grit." Louisa had been to see me and had only been home a few minutes when he was brought in. She bore it as she has all these things with wonderful calmness and true Christian resignation.

As the hours passed that evening for Mr. Erwin's return I began to feel very anxious, it was prayer meeting night and at 7 o'clock went into my neighbor's and told him I must ask him soon to go out and learn for me his whereabouts. Just then he came and when he told me I said, "I fear that is Vinton's death blow". Mr. E. returned very soon and I made preparations for going early next morning and for staying a while. It was too icy and dark that night and Mary was with me. Next day as I locked my doors and went out I said, "goodbye home". I felt, as it has proved to be, the last of our life in the cozy little Grove St. home. Mr. E. has never seen the house since, has been too busy to go there. Vinton was perfectly conscious Thursday and part of Friday. At 4 P.M. Friday he said to the doctors who dressed his wounds, "don't let my wife see the wounds." That night he began to grow restless, inflammation of the brain had set in, and before morning he grew so wild we had to call in help besides the two watchers who were with him. After that the Dr. kept him under the influence of powerful hypodermic injections until his death which was at 1:30 P.M. Sunday. It was very hard not to see his face, it being bandaged except below the ears. He had a very full beard and mustache all winter which were very becoming. Both were sheared away and I could hardly make it seem that it was Vinton. It all seemed more real to Mr. E. because he saw all the worst of it.

Our family, the nurse and Mr. and Mrs. Stultz, Adventists, were present at his death Mr. S. and V. were bosom friends and when we saw that the heart had ceased to beat I said, "Brother Stultz, can you pray?" We all knelt and our hearts were lifted up by the beautiful words of prayer by this dear gifted Christian man. Very soon our friends from all parts of the city began to come in to sorrow and to rejoice with us as only God's children can, and just at eve our three deacons came together and before they left they each one prayed so very expressively in faith and consolation, truly our house has been a Bethel. Brother Stultz always prays with us (he lives near here), Rev. J.W. Davis, Adventist, who loved Vinton so dearly and greatly beloved by V., often comes and he brings peace in prayer and spiritual talks.

Last week the ladies from Adventist church held their prayer meeting here with us in the P.M. They sang some beautiful songs. They are great Bible students. They are a very active church (always talking of Jesus coming and living in readiness). I do not wonder that Vinton loved them so much. I love them too

but Mr. E. and myself choose “the old paths” and the Congregational Church is our choice. We do wish there was more spiritual activity. I can never tell how thankful I am that Vinton was led to those people. They helped him into such a blessed experience, changing his life, so it was truly “hid with Christ”, and I have such strong assurance that he is saved. His constant desire to know and to do God’s will the past year and his last beautiful testimony in prayer meeting the night before the accident. They all love to tell us how he stood with open Bible in hand and speaking from the words, “all things shall work together for good to those who love God.” (The “all things” is a favorite expression of his Pastor Mr. Davis). So knowing his earnest purpose of heart, and his daily study of God’s Word, we have not a shadow of a doubt that “it is well” with our Vinton. He rests, while we toil and struggle on, fighting “the good fight of faith” and having evidence of our acceptance with God. It was and unspeakable comfort to us that Louisa bore it all so bravely. She certainly is a remarkably consistent Christian woman. On account of her near confinement we could not all go to D. R. for burial and a kind lady suggested our leaving the body in the receiving vault here for a while. It was a great relief to me to have it so. The funeral was held in East Bridgeport, 2 miles from here, in the Adventist church, Mr. Davis conducting the services. Mr. Prentiss (our Pastor) was to assist but was not well so was not present.

More than two years ago Vinton selected texts and wrote on the flyleaf of his Bible and told Louisa he wished them to be used at his funeral, 2 Thess. 4:13-18 – Titus 2:13-14. It was a remarkably impressive service. My heart was so filled with exaltation I could not weep. I felt more like rejoicing as the glories of resurrection morning were portrayed. Mr. E. and Louisa felt the same. The singing was beautiful, “Abide With Me”, “Sweet Sleeping” and, at my request, Mrs. Stacey sang very sweetly “Flee as a Bird” and a quartette sang “The Christian’s Goodnight (in No. 6)”.

We requested our friends in both churches not to buy flowers but the Adventist End. Society sent a great flat box of Easter lilies, his shopmates a large bouquet of roses and Mr. and Mrs. Melville (Congregational) another bouquet of roses. All were tied with white satin ribbon, and a Temp. Society of which Vinton had been a member sent an elegant Maltese Cross. The Congregational and Advent Endeavor Societies sat in a body wearing badges. My brothers Wallace and Albert came on from Boston. It gave us a good deal of comfort to have them there and I cannot take time to tell of all. It would take pages to tell of all the wonderful kindness, sympathy and generosity of all the people. It seemed as if the whole city was stirred with sympathy. They showed it in so many ways and quickly; The eve of Feb. 14 Deacon Northrup came in, the night before the funeral, and said, “our church has sent you a Valentine” handing us a long envelope filled with bills. As we hesitated, he said, “guess how much there is.” We said, “there must be more than \$20.” He replied, “there are \$108.” You may well believe we were almost overcome and soon after, a lady from Advent church came and put in Louisa’s hands a gift from Christian Endeavor and church of \$61. We were truly amazed and could only say it is the wonderful goodness and mercy of God. And there followed \$75 from the firm and employees, and some small donations privately. All this before the funeral and since then the company has paid the funeral expenses and burial to Deep River and one doctor’s bill of \$25.

O how can we but feel that God’s loving hand is open toward us. We do trust every promise. And it seems as if never was a family so much prayed for. I said, “I know you all wonder that I do not weep more, I wonder myself that I am so calm.” Mrs. Abbott says, “you are upheld by the prayers of your friends.” And it was so in Louisa’s sickness. It seemed as if all we had to do was to be carried along. Since then the St. Peter Lodge, Odd Fellows, has sent her a donation of \$50. V. had not met the last Quarterly dues so she could not claim anything. Someone from Arcanum Lodge here wrote to them. They sent her a very kind letter. Arcanum furnished a nurse three days. Louisa’s income entirely ceased at Vinton’s death so you may know how much all this has helped and encouraged us all. We are thankful there were no debts left unpaid. Our rooms in Grove St. were too small to keep us all, L’s sickness making such a difference, so we were obliged to move our goods over here as there are six rooms here and close by Mr. E’s work which has crowded and worried him very much. Since Vinton

ceased work he could not get one half hour to help me so I had all the care of moving as I have of everything concerning us and on L's account I must hurry to get moved here and save rent beside. It was only \$11 over there, and here it is \$15. It cost me \$13 to move. I had to take two of the worst days of the winter to tear up and pack.

I have to walk quite a distance at each end of the route to get street cars and the first morning I went over was as near a blizzard as could be. Cold, snowing, blowing as I waded through a deep snowdrift I began to pity myself. I thought of Peter sinking and I said, "Lord save or I perish" and then came the words, "but I know in whom I have believed" and then I lifted up my heart, for I thought of your dear Alice, and that wonderful experience of yours, and I said, "dear Father this is the stormiest experience of my life. I know that you helped Alice out of deeper seas than this – I know that thy power can take me safely through all that lies before me." Again I thought of how you were lifted out of the depths. It seemed that all needful help came to me and I was borne along and I had two good strong women sent to me before noon and they helped me bravely through that and the second day, so I had no real heavy things to do. The third day a truck man brought them here and they are stacked up in two chambers waiting till we can find rooms that suit us better and move again. I trust God's mercy through it all.

Still, there is an intense nervous strain for we must plan for such a variety of work. Louisa thinks now she will go to her parents in St. Peter (7 miles out on a farm) about the middle of June. I think she will conclude to leave Mary with us, but it is hard for her to do it and hard for her to leave us. We have always done all for her that we could for an own daughter. She appreciates it. If we had a home, and larger income, would urge their staying with us, but Mr. E. is breaking down I fear. V's death was a great shock to him. They had worked side by side for four years and the past year Christian sympathies had brought them very close to each other. So now comes sewing and packing and selling off things which L. feels badly to part with. I cannot look forward to a very restful summer. I never had such a wearisome experience. The noise and confusion and unhomelikeness of it all. And Vinton's burial too will be a sad time for us all. We think of going to D. R. May 10 hoping to return same day. Will take Albert and Mary and leave Carl (2 years old last December, a beautiful boy) with a kind lady near here. Baby Ruth is a sweet little creature born March 7. She must go with us. Vinton said a few weeks before his death, "if it is a girl let's name her Ruth." The nurse promised to stay 2 ½ weeks but was suddenly called to another engagement at the end of the 1st week so it left me in a hard place but I bought all the cooked food I could, hired washing and ironing and was carried through and now I will tell you of one more strain on my poor head.

We have received over 50 letters and I have replied to all but one besides numerous postals. And then our Ladies Aid Society had planned a sale of aprons from all over the States the 20th of April to help on church debt (the "Spectre") and they say I was the one who started it some months ago. I had planned to get 20 aprons and did write for 21 and I received 19, which required two letters each. I never could have done all this but for, "grace, wonderful grace." It was a "labor of love" and I am glad it is over. The night of the sale was very stormy. They sold \$20 worth and had some left for another occasion.

As I look back I am filled with wonder that I have lived through it all. We have many callers and our days are hurried and never accomplish half we think we need to do. The baby frets a good deal and L. cannot help me as she would like to and it does seem many times as if my head and heart and back will entirely fail me and I wonder if I can keep up 5 or 6 weeks longer this heavy load of care and work. I have felt for two years as if I could hardly keep house though I hired nearly all my heavy work done. The trouble all comes from nervous weakness and nothing but rest will bring relief. After the children leave and we get moved, have no idea now where we will find rooms, I am going to try and favor myself. Every day the word tells me, "my God shall supply all your need" and all my prayer is, "Thy will be done." Beautiful letters have come in showers from North, South, East and West. Thank God for Christian fellowship and "intercession of the saints." Your own precious letters and "True Comfort"

booklet gave me an unspeakable comfort. How gladly I would reply to every line in each if only I had time and strength. At times it has seemed as if you were both very near, almost within touch. I cannot express it, the sense of your influence and blessing your own experiences have brought to me in the past and now. Truly God's mercies are "more than I can ask or even think."

Now it is April 30 and I must write another "joint" letter to sister Carrie B., David, and William in Wisconsin. Have never given them the particulars of Vinton's death and funeral. The aprons I secured were 2 from Medford, Minnesota, 1 from Montana, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Alabama, Florida, California, Michigan, Connecticut 5, Massachusetts 3. Now I will give you a rest.

Yours truly, truly, E. G. Erwin